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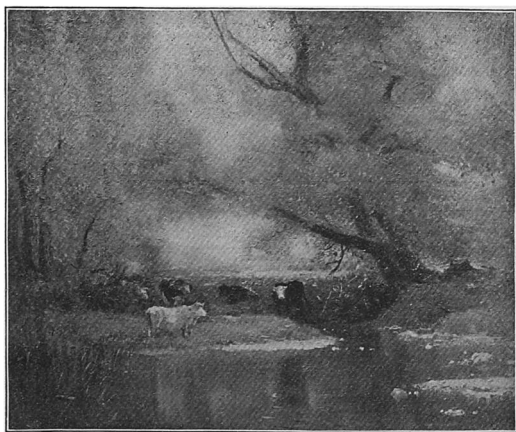
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ARTHUR PARTON, N.A.

LANDSCAPE AND CATTLE.

(30x25.)

A conscientious technician, careful of detail, who yet does not lose the spirit in the elaboration of the facts of the scene, is Arthur Parton, the landscape painter. His sympathies are essentially with peaceful rural subjects, the margins of meadow brooks, and the thicketed edges of fields, rather than with the more severe and dignified phases of scenery, although he has painted this latter class with excellent results. Indeed, one of his finest and most effective pictures was a scene upon the Hudson River in midwinter, which had a strong dramatic quality of composition and effect. But it is in the friendly glow of sunlight, or among summer fields mellowed by the shadows of cloud-mottled skies, that he is happiest in his labors. Mr. Parton was born at Hudson, N. Y., in 1842, and studied under William T. Richards in Philadelphia. In 1869 he made a visit to Europe; in 1872 became an Associate of the National Academy, and in 1884 an Academician. He is a member of the American Water Color Society, and has his studio in New York, although he resides in the country and does much of his painting there.

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Theobald Chartran is perhaps the only foreigner whose annual visits to this country for portrait commissions may be condoned for the excellence of his work. With the portraits now exhibited at the Knoedler Gallery there are two canvases of ambitious import. The exhibition picture of "Siegfried" has a good light handling on the whole although the chiaroscuro in detail is far from perfect. The theatrical pose and spectacular composition make it a dramatic *tour de force*.

The historical portrait group, depicting the signing of the protocol of peace between Spain and the United States, at the White House, on August 12, 1898, is of supreme importance. While it is to be regretted that not an American artist was deemed worthy to perpetuate this monumental national incident, we must accept this canvas as a resplendent artistic production, in which the face of the President alone is least satisfactory, it being a good likeness, yet with a somewhat strained expression, but considering the momentous occasion the painter may have been truer to nature than at first thought. The other figures are well high perfect, and the grouping natural and well balanced. The painting is rendered in a subdued key, textures are masterly, the atmosphere of the canvas makes it spacious; the view through the window is well chosen. It is certainly a noteworthy example.

Of the portraits it need only be said that they are in the vein of vitality with which Chartran limns his sitters, although the personality of the artist asserts itself sufficiently to make one forget sometimes the subject for the manner of execution, which is always a defect in portrait painting. Nevertheless these portraits are brilliant examples.

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The Boston Museum has again received a legacy to its vested funds of \$140,000, which, however, will not be available for some time to come.

## THE ACADEMY OF DESIGN, OR THE SUCCESSFUL IMITATORS.

A "poor literary feller" who steals part of a plot, borrows a character from one novel and a bit of dialect from another is so quickly pounced upon by the clever public,—let alone the expert critics,—that he is branded as a plagiarist before his lucubrations get outside the city limits.

'Tis marvelous that a jury of artists should be less perspicacious, less discriminating; yet here, in this seventy-fifth exhibition of the work of American artists, there has been no separation of wheat from chaff, no differentiation between the honest personal note, sounded by the few, and that mass of slick and slavish imitation which "fills in."

True, there are those on the walls who have not yet learned, and never will learn, to make wholesale transfers from another man's brush; but what dullard would not, after a walk past the pictures, acquiesce in the fact that much of the show is but a reflection of better work by better men?

Do not the makers of these second-hand pictures ever think that tens of thousands of their observant compatriots yearly go abroad? Are not the Royal Academy and Salon catalogues plentiful, and do not crowds flock to the Luxembourg?

We are a "knowing" race; and just to see how the merest tyro unerringly "spots" the canvases of popular or notorious artists would, it seems to me, be a timely warning to bold poachers, were they less immersed in their own monumental egotism.

The Academy is not in a remote hamlet or listless suburb; and a jury of artists should certainly know as much of what is going on in the art world as a fairly intelligent layman. This jury does not; hence the sooner it awakes from this lethargy the better for all concerned.

Several canvases have perhaps resulted from the impression which one strong artist-mind has made upon weak and worshipping followers. These works bear the imprint of a dominant and dominating painter who, if not present in the flesh, is nevertheless very much *en evidence* in the spirit. He flocks, to-day by himself and opens his show synchronously with the Academy's. The latter hung him in the hall once and now he takes his big revenge, since pupils and followers plant his sturdy oaks, round his massive skies, and impaste his rugged foregrounds all about these walls,—yet they omit the quotation marks.

The ostrich,—stupid bird,—sticks his head in the ground, and trusts the hunter will be blind to his big body. There are a great many ostriches in the present exhibition.

Dessar deserves his prize. It is my misfortune, and, no doubt, my fault, that I can't understand that wipe with a big brush charged with yellow ochre which sweeps across the picture behind the shepherd.

This artist has for years painted a region of his own and with such success that he has *his* style. And now a mushroom-growth has sprung up about him, so that his peculiar method of painting a flock of sheep in a solid phalanx, his shepherd behind the flock, and many a color trait formerly *sui generis*, are here copied with varying degrees of success and deceit by admiring imitators.

All this is not so reprehensible as it is funny; for to think that the modern man and woman have no pictorial memory for lines, subject and color is simply to reckon without your host. Remember what Abe Lincoln said acent fooling people.

Nor have speculations stopped at slight modifications of the popular home-product. Distant studies of foreign friends have been laid under contribution, when an afternoon call has afforded a chance to the 'cute one to filch quite enough to make a rather imposing painting. (And it is an imposition, too.)

These lesser lights do but imitate the more effulgent orbs in the Academy system who themselves are not above using the reflected light of Corot, Courbet, Mauve or Maris whenever they can possibly do so.

What a revelation were it to arrange two large panels with Mauve and Maris heading one and a couple of good Barbizon pictures topping another!

How meekly would the greater part of the present exhibition take its place beneath these captains, the essence of whose genius suffers a gradual dilution all down the line, till finally naught but an insipid decoction remains.

We all recollect,—if we choose to,—how a present-day prominent painter used to array his Corot-like exhibition on the wall of the Twenty-third street building, and that a photograph of them would have baffled "Papa Corot" himself to tell which were his own, which the borrowed plumes. He did not hoodwink all the Academicians, for they joked about it; but the jury passed the copies and the hanging committee gave them a fine place.

What happens when this premium is placed on such vicious practices? Is American art advanced?

Let us, however leave this exotic atmosphere of the forcing-house to go out into the fresh air of individual effort, where men work along their own lines and hold the mirror up to nature.

Murphy, Howe, Coffin, Couse, Crane, Van Laer, and Wiles,—not to name them all,—present their own translation of nature's language.

The foremost of these men is J. Francis Murphy, who,—to employ a musical term,—is playing in as high a key as is compatible with a full and vigorous harmony. His superb drawing and virile handling of line and mass are well exemplified in his one silvery contribution to

the show; and only a man of his authority and power could support such a tension and not "flat." His "Landscape" is a delight, quite as unaffected and simple as its modest title.

And W. H. Howe drives American cattle across American fields; his well drawn and composed pictures holding their own,—and more,—with the best of similar subjects in this year's London and Paris exhibitions.

Wiggins and Craig have excellent canvases; but would not the former's golden "Swiss Bull" be a pretty long animal were he to turn parallel to us? And is there not too much landscape for Mr. Craig's one cow? His "Sheep" is a much smaller but a much more important example, and, of course, is hung in an out-of-the-way nook.

Mr. Parton has a fine, bold Catskill hillside into which he has put absolutely deformed cattle; and this is all the more noteworthy since this artist can paint and draw cattle so that none may cavil.

W. A. Coffin's work has been much discussed, yes! more than discussed; but he paints with profound honesty and determination, is independent of any outside influence, does not follow someone else's last year's successes, and in "October," there stands a picture as uncompromising as a New England conscience. It is the best thing Mr. Coffin has painted, and I like it for itself, and for all there is behind it.

Bruce Crane and Kost have chosen the hour of gloaming or the pale moonlight for shore and sea effects, and their strength is incontestible. In both, to be sure, evidences of haste may be found, but this is more than balanced by vigorous, direct and broad painting. In so much sweet and decadent glaze their handling is refreshing.

Couse catches the spirit, light and life of that strip of land that runs along the Channel, a region so rich in subtle atmospheric effects, in its long twilights, in traditions and picturesque fisher-folk. Ambitious, clever and energetic, his prize canvas is but an earnest of work to come. But Fred. Remington's,—I beg pardon!—"My Bunkie," Mr. Schreyvogel's picture, while good in color, full of action and restrained in tone, is not a first prize performance.

The big reach of sand and distance in Irving R. Wiles' "Long Island Road" is marred by the discordant and impertinent sky, but, withal, it is a very good picture, and that of his wife is one of the best portraits in the exhibition, attractive in color and with the simplicity of the famous "Stokes" portrait which is somehow recalled by it. A figure-piece must have distinction, and Marble's "Spring Time," fine in draughtsmanship and handling, is full of this dignity, repose and reserve.

Many things are here *in vacuo*: they have seemingly been painted in a laboratory bell-jar or at frightfully high altitudes (not artistic altitudes, be it said). The Roseland *genre* pieces, Perry's, J. G. Brown's, and others of that ilk, are devoid of envelopment of aught approaching atmosphere. The apples in "Cornered" are far too small for such a wise old farmer to gather, and such color as they have would startle him; while his opponent's hat would never fit his head. May be that's why he put it on the floor.

If consistency be a jewel, then Minor, E. L. Henry, Bricher, Shurtleff, Tait, Hart, Miller and Bristol can be content to have what every artist cannot buy, especially in "a bad year," when diamonds have advanced. Whatever has been said in praise or extenuation concerning them ere this remains unshaken in the face of what they show us this year.

Van Laer and Smillie, each in his own manner, have sent excellent work, and the former has with a bold, sketchy and fresh brush reproduced three as good landscapes as he ever painted,—full of local color, suggestive, immensely direct and to the point.

*Il n'y a pas d'homme nécessaire*, say the French, and if Church is away, his usual preempted place is filled by Mr. Harper's sparkling, bejewelled, imaginative decoration, which stands in marked contrast with the quiet snowfields and bleak skies in J. T. Howe's little "Winter near Montclair."

"The Scout" of L. C. Earle is a very strong picture, harmonious and full of reserve; perhaps the apple-green in the sky is somewhat hard to reconcile with the yellow beneath.

"Autumn" has not a few adherents, but far and away above them all is Miss Bunker's rendition of the mysterious envelopment of nature that conceals the year's approaching death. This is Miss Bunker's first exhibited landscape: what a promise,—and a hostage!

The poetic time of the year is restful, and this is what Bolton Jones' picture isn't. If he would not put in all he sees, if only he *felt* the bared tree-trunks more and drew them less, the clever color would not be wasted on such confusing scrabbles. A man who has ridden himself of cumbersome detail (quite like the elaborate material Mr. Jones insists on) and who has become simpler, broader, crayer, and less chromo-like is Kruseman van Elten, whose Holland and Normandy *motifs* are charming. Here is a veteran who discards scholastic dicta and starts afresh.

We miss from the Academy's half-way house such names as Winslow Homer, Horatio Walker, Abbott Thayer, D. W. Tryon and Cecelia Beaux. We know that not a little of renown attaches to some of our expatriated painters because they *are* Americans; indeed, I think they more than foster the title and perhaps use it in their business. Why, then, do not Shannon, Boughton, Abbey, Sargent, and Whistler lend additional lustre to themselves and us at once by exhibiting at least one canvas at home?

And,—while putting queries,—one is tempted to ask, is the hanging

committee obtuse or color-blind to present to us such patches of incongruous and disturbing tones on the wall-spaces; to mar the effect of those two opalescent pictures, Mr. Murphy's "Landscape" and the "Dodge Prize," by crowding them together; and to make every portrait turn, when possible, its back to its companion? True, some of them deserve the cold shoulder. It may be in the galleries, it may be in ourselves, but there is a cat-in-a-strange-garret feeling at the new quarters; the old galleries and the regular Academy crowd had "found themselves," like the complex machinery in Kipling's story, and the barn-like, depressing aspect on a day with a small attendance was not so overpowering as in Fifty-seventh street. Let us hope that permanent halls—any but these—may cheer, even inebriate, future exhibitors. Some might partake of the "drink divine" and be pardoned if they imbibed freely enough to unlimber Academic rigidity and summon up pluck enough to tell their own story in their own way.

LEIGH HUNT.



— GEORGE ELMER BROWNE.

A PROVINCETOWN WHALER.

(48x36.)

I take great pleasure in giving above a reproduction of the last and best work by the young artist, George Elmer Browne. This painting merits high praise for its outdoor feeling, its sincere portrayal of nature, the charm which invests a brush without mannerism. To the observant eye of a critical collector there is the earnest of great merit, and even the enquiring amateur compares the honesty of purpose and poetic simplicity of this scene with belabored reproductions of studio compositions.

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A worthy exhibit of the sketches of Childe Hassam should be visited at the Macbeth Galleries. They are "Vignettes of Manhattan," types of the thoroughfares, snatches of street life. Often hasty notes carelessly jotted down, as characteristic as Raffaelli's Paris views; just the thing for the portfolio, if not for the wall.

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Another recent contribution to the Metropolitan Museum is a portrait of Daniel O'Connell, by Sir Martin Archer Shee, which was presented to the museum by John D. Crimmins: Sir Martin's works are exceedingly rare, and the one which Mr. Crimmins secured for the museum was wanted by others for collections in Europe. The poet-painter was president of the Royal Academy in 1830, and his portraits were considered among the best of their day.